

## ABOUT BLOGGING

**Do you ever wonder what your children think about? Perhaps you should read their Web logs or “blogs.” Blogs are a type of online journal that people use to share their thoughts and feelings; they may be in written or video format. Posting blogs allows children to develop both their technical and creative skills. It also lets them connect to other users with similar interests and write about their experiences, their personal lives, popular culture, and any other topic that crosses their minds.**

If done safely, blogging can be a good exercise that encourages critical thinking and creative writing. Unfortunately, children sometimes forget their blogs are not private and share information not intended for outsiders. Then, there are those children who simply do not care if their information is public; the more eyes they attract, the better.

Recent studies show that teenagers write roughly half of all blogs today, with **two out of three** providing their age, **three out of five** revealing their location and contact information, and **one in five** revealing their full name.

Some blogs track the number of visitors and have places for their audiences to comment or rate them. As a result, children may engage in risky behavior—such as posting intimate details—in order to gain popularity on the Internet. Other risky behavior includes not using privacy settings, or posting inappropriate or illegal content.

These risky behaviors leave children open to being targeted by predators and cyber bullies. For example, a child's peers may take information shared in a blog and use it to humiliate him at school. Likewise, a child sharing inappropriate content in a blog may find herself suspended from school or losing out on future educational opportunities. They might also find themselves approached by someone who intends them harm.

If your child has a blog, or plans to one day have a blog, make sure to reiterate basic Internet rules: Don't give you personal information and don't post crude and inappropriate pictures on the blog. It is also advised that parents should follow their child's blog either actively or anonymously to monitor what is being posted. Remember, you as a parent always have the final say in what your child does on the Internet and can discontinue their blog if necessary.



For more information about Internet Safety, please visit [www.riag.ri.gov](http://www.riag.ri.gov)

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